

# Prof. Yao Zemin: be always eager to learn from Chinese medicine

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## Editor's note

During December 01–02, the 3th Longhua International Forum on Digestive Disease was held in Shanghai, China with the focus on characteristic treatment of traditional Chinese medicine on liver disease. During this forum, we are glad to interview Prof. Yao Zemin (*Figures 1,2*) to share his perspectives with us.

## Expert's introduction

Dr. Yao Zemin (*Figure 3*) is a Professor in the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology, and Immunology and the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of Ottawa. Born in Shanghai, China, Dr. Yao obtained his MSc and PhD in Biochemistry at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, and his postdoctoral research training at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, and at the Gladstone Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases at the University of California, San Francisco. In 1991, Dr. Yao was appointed as an Assistant Professor of Biochemistry at the University of Alberta where he established his first independent research program at the Lipid and Lipoprotein Research Group of the University of Alberta with support from the Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Alberta, and the Medical Research Council of Canada (now the Canadian Institutes of Health Research). In 1994, Dr. Yao joined the University of Ottawa Heart Institute to direct the Molecular and Cell Biology Laboratory of the CIHR Lipoprotein and Atherosclerosis Group. Dr. Yao has occupied the position of Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology of the University of Ottawa for 10 years.



**Figure 1** Prof. Yao is delivering a speech.

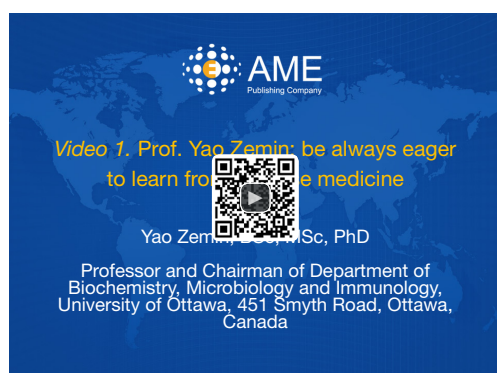
## Interview

**LCM:** *What is your viewpoint towards the characteristic treatment of traditional Chinese medicine highlighted by this meeting?*

**Prof. Yao:** I think this meeting is not covering characteristic treatment of traditional Chinese medicine on all kinds of diseases, but with a focus on liver disease, such as fatty liver disease, non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (Nash), and liver cancer. From my perspective, as I have been working on liver diseases for many years, it's my good chance to learn something from it.

**LCM:** *You have presented a topic titled “natural medicine and glucolipid metabolism”, could you please share the take-home message with us?*

**Prof. Yao:** The main message of my presentation is trying to share some of our new discoveries that is the traditional Chinese medicine treatment for metabolic disease. It's not just on carbohydrate and lipoproteins, it also affects



**Figure 2** Prof. Yao Zemin: be always eager to learn from Chinese medicine (1).

Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/article/view/29595>



**Figure 3** Prof. Yao Zemin.

a million of experts on metabolism. So that is take-home message I give to them at the end of my presentation.

**LCM:** *As the Director of the Molecular and Cell Biology Laboratory in University of Ottawa, would you share with us the current research focus in your lab?*

**Prof. Yao:** My lab is set in the Department of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Immunology at University of Ottawa. We have been working on two aspects: one is the fundamental basic research which aims to understand metabolism generally. The other one is trying to develop drugs that would be able to cure most of the clinical diseases.

**LCM:** *You have a broad research interest in the metabolism of lipids and lipoproteins. Would you like to share the latest research that your team is doing?*

**Prof. Yao:** What we're doing now is still trying to understand the relationship between the lipoproteins as you mentioned and also the liver disease because what the lipoproteins are actually or the lipoprotein complexes is synthesized in the liver and then released as a protein lipid complex, we call them lipoproteins. and if the liver fails to release them, then they will be killed by these lipids in the liver that's what the cause of the failure of the liver disease. So that's what we try to understand the relationship between how the liver is synthesizing these lipoprotein complexes and how they secrete them into the plasma.

**LCM:** *As an expert on biochemistry, microbiology and immunology, what do you particularly expect from this conference?*

**Prof. Yao:** My expectation from this kind of conference is always trying to learn more about traditional Chinese medicine as I'm not an expert in this filed. Moreover, I am really happy to see so many speakers being invited to talk about the history and origin of traditional Chinese medicine, like Zhejiang school, Shanghai school. These speeches are very educational both for me and the audience. However, I do have some reservations about some of these western doctors who are talking about the treatments. The reason why I'm not entirely agree with those treatments lies in it's not related to Chinese medicine, and more importantly those techniques are very old and outdated in my view. From my side, I would try my best to introduce the newest discovery in the West to the audiences.

**LCM:** *With so many roles at the same time, how do you manage your time and maintain work-life balance?*

**Prof. Yao:** The work-life balance is always challenging to me as everybody does, my way of dealing with it is trying to develop my passion towards what I do. Then, when I work, I think that's part of my joy. But honestly, I think it is not easy for everybody.

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## Footnote

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*Ethical Statement:* The author is accountable for all

aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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1. Young L. Prof. Yao Zemin: be always eager to learn from Chinese medicine. *Asvide* 2019;6:009. Available online: <http://www.asvide.com/article/view/29595>

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